According to Unit Trust of India (UTI), US-64 is an open-ended scheme and UTI honours repurchase requests of all unit-holders. During the period October 1, 1998 to November 27, 1998 the repurchases aggregated to Rs. 3508 crore. The repurchase amount which was Rs. 2385 crore for October, 1998 came down to almost half in November, 1998 at Rs. 1123 crore.

(d) The Chairman, UTI has written an open letter to all unit-holders explaining the facts of US-64. UTI has also constituted a high level committee under the chairmanship of Shri Deepak Parekh to make suggestions for further strengthening the US-64.

Functioning of Nationalised Banks in Rural Areas

205. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of poor services of nationalised Banks including their causal attitude towards customers in rural areas;

(b) whether any steps have been taken by Government to improve functioning of nationalised Banks in rural areas;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) to (d) In the context of occasional complaints regarding indifferent service by some branches of public sector banks including branches in rural areas, Government have been impressing on the managements of banks to improve customer service. Improvement of customer service is an ongoing process to which the Government/Reersve Bank of India and the top management of public sector banks give continuing attention.

Recognising that indifferent service is often caused by problems of attitude, the banks have included, in the course content of different training course, capsules relating to the need for changing attitudes of bank employees to the customers of banks in order to ensure the improvement in customer service.

Earmarking of Budget for North-Eastern States

206. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to earmark 10 per cent of the budget of Central Ministries for the North East;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) in what manner the Central Government proposes to distribute this amount amongst the North-Eastern States?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) to (c) The Government of India have decided to create a Central Pool of Resources for the North East (and Sikkim) by utilising unspent amount(s) out of 10% of the budgets of the concerned Central Ministries/Departments earmarked for these States. The funds available in the Central Pool are meant to be utilised for meeting the requirements of specific projects in the North East and Sikkim for speedier development of the Region.

Long term foreign Capital Investment in the Country

207. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total volume of long term foreign capital actually invested in the country in each of the years since 1991-92;

(b) the proportion of this aggregate investment going to the services and the luxury consumption sectors; and

(c) the additional job opportunities created in these two sectors on account of foreign investment taking place?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

उत्तर प्रदेश के गांवों तथा जनजातीय क्षेत्रों में बैकों की कमी होना

208.**श्री मनोहर कान्त ध्यानी**: क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि उत्तर प्रदेश के चमोली,रूद्रप्रयाग,टिहरी,पिथौरागढ़ और उत्तर काशी जैसे पर्वतीय,सीमान्त और जनजातीय क्षेत्रों में बैंकों की कमी अभी भी बनी हुई हैं;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि चमोली जिले के मुख्यालय गोपश्वर में केवल स्टेट बैंक ऑफ इंडिया की एक ही शाखा है और क्या सरकार ने पंजाब नेशनल बैंक या किसी अन्य राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक की एक नई शाखा खोले जाने की लम्बे समय से की जा रही मांग पर कोई कार्यवाही की है;और

(ग) यदि हां,तो वहां अन्य बैंक कब तक खुल जाएगा और यदि नहीं,तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

वित्त मंत्रालय(बैंकिंग,राजस्व तथा बीमा) में राज्य मंत्री (श्री कादम्बूर एम.आर.जनार्दनन): (क) भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक द्वारा दी गई सूचना के अनुसार,उत्तर प्रदेश के पांच जिलों में क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंकों समेत वाणिज्यिक बैंकों की शाखाओं की संख्या निम्नानुसार हैं:-

जिले	शाखाओं की संख्या
1. चमोली	48
2. गढ़वाल	102
3. टिहरी गढ़वाल	73
4. पिथौरागढ़	66
5. उत्तर काशी	26

भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक की वर्तमान नीति के अंतर्गत,वर्तमान ग्रामीण शाखाओं के कारोबार में वृद्वि करने और/या सेवा क्षेत्र दृष्टिकोण योजना के प्रभावशाली ढंग से कार्यान्वयन के लिए ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में अतिरिक्त शाखाएं खोलने की आवश्यकता निर्धारित करने का निर्णय लेने के लिए प्रत्येक बैंक स्वतंत्र है । बैंकों से यह भी कहा गया है कि वे पहाड़ी /आदिवासी क्षेत्रों की विशेष आवश्यकताओं को उचित महत्व दें । बैंकों के वे प्रस्ताव जो उक्त मानदंडों के अनुरूप होते हैं और संबंधित राज्य सरकार द्वारा जिनकी सिफारिश की जाती है,ऐसे प्रत्येक मामले की गुणावगुणों के आधार पर भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक द्वारा विचार किया जाता है

(ख) और(ग) गोपेश्वर,उत्तर प्रदेश में भारतीय स्टेट बैंक की एक शाखा है । भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक ने अब गोपेश्वर में एक शाखा खोलने के लिए पंजाब नेशनल बैंक को अधिकृत किया है ।

Rate of Inflation

209. SHRI ANANTA SETHI:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the annual inflation rate which stood at 4.63 per cent last year has been recorded on 10th October, 1998 as 8.10 per cent apart from steep increase in the whole sale price index (WPI) for all commodities particularly onion, pulses and vegetables; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken so far to check inflation and curb day-to-day increase in prices of all essential commodities including vegetables, pulses, fruits etc?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) The annual inflation rate on 10th October 1998 was 8.10 per cent as against 4.70 per cent last year. Steep rise in wholesale prices was recorded in a few commodities of daily use such as onion which recorded the highest increase of 310% followed by potato with 298% increase and pulses by 15% over the year.

(b) A number of policy initiatives have been taken by the Government to check the growth of prices. Government has reduced duty on import of edible oils from 25% to 15% to facilitate large volume of import to support domestic